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*Sent out
by D/Pres
27 AUG 68*

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence
Deputy Director for Science and Technology
Inspector General
General Counsel

SUBJECT : Request for Comments on Revised Fitness Report System

1. The attached proposal by the Deputy Director for Plans recommends changes in our Fitness Report System.

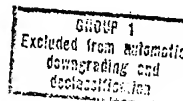
a. Instead of the present five point scale (Outstanding, Superior, Proficient, Adequate, Weak) there would be a three point scale (Outstanding, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory). The rationale here is that only three of the five categories are now used to any degree and the present scale makes it difficult to determine what constitutes an unsatisfactory rating.

b. The reviewing official would have stronger role in the revised system and would be responsible for ranking individuals and for adjudicating adversely critical reports.

c. There would be a mandatory performance consultation each year as a separate action to the fitness report.

2. Your comments on these proposals would be greatly appreciated and would aid in the current review of this perennial problem. May I have them by July 25?

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TAB A

Rating Distribution by Career Service

<u>Outstanding</u>	<u>Strong</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Weak</u>
23.4%	48.2%	24.3%	3.6%	.5%
7.2%	66.6%	24.7%	1.4%	0.1%
7.0%	63.5%	27.8%	1.6%	0.1%
6.7%	64.0%	27.8%	1.4%	0.1%
9.3%	60.4%	28.7%	1.6%	0.0%

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Proposal for a Revised Fitness Reporting System

1. Background:

a. During the last twenty years the Agency, the Federal Government, and private industry have experimented with a great number of Fitness Report Forms and Systems. Much effort has been expended in analyzing the results achieved by existing systems, and attempting to correct weaknesses through the development of "improved" systems and procedures. Few tangible improvements have been realized, but there is a general and almost universal conclusion that Fitness Reporting must be continued for personnel management purposes, even though a truly satisfactory system has not emerged.

b. Within the Agency, Fitness Reports have been used to rate employee performance, personal traits, and potential by the use of: (a) Adjective or numerical ratings, and (b) narrative evaluatory statements. General agreement exists that evaluatory statements have been more significant and have served better than adjective or numerical ratings in providing a picture of the individual and his manner of performance.

2. Evaluation of Current Fitness Reporting System:

a. Adjective Ratings: The current system uses five adjective ratings: Weak, Adequate, Proficient, Strong, and Outstanding, to appraise the performance of specific duties and overall performance. In practice, however, only three of the ratings are generally used: Proficient, Strong and Outstanding. The trend has been to use more of the higher ratings each year.

CS Career Service Fitness Reporting of Overall Performance

	<u>GS-9, 10, 11</u>		<u>GS-12-13</u>		<u>GS-14 & Above</u>
	<u>1962</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1967</u>
Weak	1%	0.1%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%
Adequate	7%	2.0%	4.7%	0.5%	0.6%
Proficient	45%	23.0%	35.5%	18.7%	9.8%
Strong	42%	69.0%	55.9%	76.1%	71.8%
Outstanding	5%	6.0%	3.5%	4.6%	17.7%

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- (3). Rating of Overall Performance: In making the overall performance rating, the rater will consider all factors affecting performance, including personal traits, skills, conduct, and any limitations which may apply. He will include a narrative evaluation to explain the basis for the rating and to give a general picture of where the individual stands in relation to others rated in the same group. In addition, the rater will comment on potential, suggest assignments and training needs, and outline personal traits of significance.
- (4). Evaluation by Reviewing Official: The Reviewing Officer will include a brief evaluation of performance, potential and future utilization of the individual rated. Whenever possible, he should indicate the relative ranking of the individual with others in the same grade and type of work. The reviewing officer will be responsible for assuring that the raters under his supervision adhere to realistic standards and undertake and follow through on necessary corrective actions. The reviewing official will be responsible also for resolving any critical differences of opinion between the individual and the rater, particularly if the ratings are adversely critical. If major differences cannot be adequately resolved by the component, they will be referred through command channels to the Career Service concerned for review.

b. Action Required on the Basis of Fitness Report Ratings:

Unsatisfactory Rating: A rating of unsatisfactory on any duty will require positive action to train or assist the individual to improve his performance of the work or will result in his assignment to other work. An overall rating of unsatisfactory will require corrective action without delay such as warning or probation, reassignment or special training. In extreme cases, separation may follow.

Outstanding Rating: A rating of outstanding on overall performance should be followed by special recognition as appropriate, including commendation, merit award, recommendation for promotion or quality step increase, or consideration for reassignment to more responsible work.

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The foregoing indicates the increasing upward trend in the use of high ratings and the loss of significance of the five rating scale. Almost 90% of our GS-14 and above personnel are rated as performing above average (Proficient). At the same time, Adequate and Weak ratings have tended not only to fall into disuse but also to become substantially indistinguishable. In practice, a rating of "Adequate" does not provide a definable or defensible basis for taking adverse actions.

b. Narrative Ratings: The current Fitness Reporting system provides a narrative evaluation of total performance. Many raters provide a descriptive and meaningful evaluation which is useful for personnel management purposes; other narrative evaluations consist of generalizations and platitudes and do not evaluate in specific terms characteristics of the individual or his performance. Improved guidelines to structure the narrative content of the evaluation should provide more useful and consistent reports.

3. Suggested Revision of the Fitness Reporting System and Fitness Report Form:

a. Characteristics:

(1). Rating Scale:

Unsatisfactory: Less than satisfactory performance. Does not meet performance requirements for the duty or the position.

Satisfactory: Performance is characterized by effectiveness in meeting duty and job requirements.

Outstanding: Performance is so exceptional in relation to requirements of the work and in comparison to performance of others doing similar work as to warrant special recognition.

(2). Rating of Specific Duties: It is believed that only significant duties should be recorded and rated. We propose to combine the revised rating scale with a descriptive rating of each duty in order to provide a more useful evaluation.

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- c. Performance Consultation: At least once a year, the supervisor will have a performance consultation with the employee being rated. This consultation may take place at the time the Fitness Report is being prepared or at some previous time as circumstances warrant. When an employee is given an unsatisfactory rating, a report of the performance consultation will be made and forwarded as an "Eyes Only" memorandum through normal command channels to the Secretary of the Career Service Board concerned. Such a performance consultation report in no way relieves the supervisor from commenting on an employee's failings or weaknesses in the regular Fitness Report. The certification that a performance consultation has been held on a specific date will appear on the Fitness Report form and will be signed by the supervisor.
- 4. Summary of Advantages of Proposed Fitness Report System:
 - a. Each adjective rating will be more meaningful when combined with the narrative description or explanation. A descriptive rating of each element of performance (duties) as well as overall performance will be obtained. This emphasis on narrative evaluation will provide more useful information for personnel management purposes.
 - b. Two of the three ratings, Unsatisfactory and Outstanding, will require that special action follows. We will not have to struggle with the meaning of the marginal "adequate" rating in connection with initiating an adverse action.
 - c. The Report of Performance Consultation will be useful to supplement the Fitness Report when an unsatisfactory rating is involved to provide evaluatory material pertinent to the corrective action being recommended.
 - d. The tendency to rate all individuals "above average" will be minimized.

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- e. The stronger role of the reviewing officer in achieving realistic and meaningful reports and in resolving differences between the individual and the rater will improve reporting and morale.

5. Revised Fitness Report Forms: Samples of the proposed revised Fitness Report Form are attached.

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(When Filled In)

FITNESS REPORT				EMPLOYEE SERIAL NUMBER	
SECTION A GENERAL					
1. NAME (Last) (First) (Middle)			2. DATE OF BIRTH	3. SEX	4. GRADE 5. SD
5. OFFICIAL POSITION TITLE			7. OFF/DIV/BR OF ASSIGNMENT		8. CURRENT STATION
9. CHECK (X) TYPE OF APPOINTMENT			10. CHECK (X) TYPE OF REPORT		
<input type="checkbox"/> CAREER <input type="checkbox"/> RESERVE <input type="checkbox"/> TEMPORARY			<input type="checkbox"/> INITIAL <input type="checkbox"/> REASSIGNMENT SUPERVISOR		
<input type="checkbox"/> CAREER-PROVISIONAL (See instructions - Section C)			<input type="checkbox"/> ANNUAL <input type="checkbox"/> REASSIGNMENT EMPLOYEE		
<input type="checkbox"/> SPECIAL (Specify):			<input type="checkbox"/> SPECIAL (Specify):		
11. DATE REPORT DUE IN O.P.			12. REPORTING PERIOD (From- to-)		
SECTION B PERFORMANCE EVALUATION					
1. EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE OF SPECIFIC DUTIES					
LIST IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE NOT MORE THAN THE FOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT DUTIES PERFORMED DURING THE RATING PERIOD. RATE PROFICIENCY OF PERFORMANCE OF EACH DUTY BY ASSIGNING THE SYMBOL APPROPRIATE FOR THE ADJECTIVE RATING AND DESCRIBING IN NARRATIVE FORM THE MANNER IN WHICH THE DUTY WAS PERFORMED.					
U - UNSATISFACTORY S - SATISFACTORY O - OUTSTANDING					
SPECIFIC DUTIES		NARRATIVE COMMENT			RATING
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
2. OVERALL PERFORMANCE IN CURRENT POSITION					RATING:
TAKE INTO ACCOUNT EVERYTHING ABOUT THE EMPLOYEE WHICH INFLUENCES HIS EFFECTIVENESS SUCH AS PERFORMANCE OF SPECIFIC DUTIES, PRODUCTIVITY, CONDUCT ON JOB, COOPERATIVENESS, PERTINENT PERSONAL TRAITS OR HABITS AND PARTICULAR LIMITATIONS OR TALENTS.					

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